



## Word Up—or Down?

- <sup>1</sup> **W**ords are everywhere. If you stop reading this and look around the room, you'll probably see words. Drive down a street, and you will see lots of words.

If you go to a convenience store, visit a department store, or stop by a video-rental store, at all three you'll see words! There are long words like *microscopic* (which actually means "extremely small") and short words like *ton* (which actually means "a huge amount"). While you look at the words that are all around you, notice how funny and confusing they can be.

**T O N**  
microscopic

- <sup>2</sup> Some words seem to mean the opposite of what they say. For instance, think about the word *driveway*. It sounds like a place to drive, but no! A driveway is a place to park. And a *parkway* isn't a place to park but instead is a place to drive! *Apartment* has the word *apart* in it, but it means a building in which individual homes are together.

- <sup>3</sup> The confusion continues. Why can people give up but never give down? Why do teachers always tell you to hurry up and never to hurry down? Why can a building burn up while it is also burning down? Why is it important to call someone by his or her name but also important not to be a name-caller? Why do friends hang out instead of hang in? Why is it nice to be called cool but awful to be called cold? If an employer is the person who hires someone and an employee is the one who does the work, then why doesn't *worker* mean the same thing as *employer* and *workee* the same thing as *employee*?

- <sup>4</sup> Spellings can also change the meanings of words. Have you ever noticed how just one letter can completely

**H o p e**



## Word Up—or Down? (cont'd)

change a word? For instance, *hop* is just *hop* until you add an *e*, and then you get *hope*. *Fat* is just *fat* until you add an *e*, and then you have *fate*. *He* is *he* until you add *t*, and then you have *the*. Of course, if you add an *s* instead, the *he* is *she*. Confused? Well, start with one of the two simplest words of all: *I*. Add the letter *t* and now you have *it*. Put an *s* at the beginning and you've turned *it* into *sit*. *Sit* is a good word, nothing strange about it, but add the letter *p* and now you have *spit*. If you don't want *spit*, then change that *i* to an *o* and now you've got *spot*. If *spot* isn't the word you were after, change the *p* to an *h* and now you've got *shot*. Drop the *s* really fast and you're down to *hot*. Change the *o* to an *a*, and see the word *hat*. Say goodbye to the *h* and hello to *at*. Send the *t* away fast and you are left with another of the simplest words of them all: *a*.

- 5 From the simplest words to the most complex, some words direct us; some inform us; some even delight and entertain us. But many of them seem to exist simply to confuse us!

**spot**  
*pit*



## Word Up—or Down?

BLACKLINE MASTER

SKILL DETERMINING THE MAIN IDEA

STRATEGY MOST IMPORTANT WORD

**Part 1. Directions:** After reading the MiniRead “Word Up—or Down?” look back through it and choose what you consider the most important word in the text. Then, complete the following statements on the lines provided.

1. The most important word in the MiniRead is \_\_\_\_\_.
2. List several reasons for choosing this word. Be sure that your reasons are supported with examples directly from the MiniRead.  
I chose this word because \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Using the most important word I chose, I now think that the main idea of this MiniRead is \_\_\_\_\_

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**Part 2. Directions:** Fill in the drawing of a hand below. Write the main idea in the palm of the hand. Then, on each finger write down one supporting detail. A supporting detail is a fact or idea from the MiniRead that supports or explains the main idea.

